

IMPACT



NO. 11

2023-NOV



10¢

SHOCK

SUSPENSTORIES

JOLTING TALES OF TENSION
IN THE
TRADITION!



NOAH'S



THE TRYST!



**A CRIME
SUSPENSE STORY**



SHE WAS FRESH OUT OF HIGH SCHOOL, WITH A YOUTHFUL BEAUTY, A CHILDLIKE INNOCENCE THAT FLOORED HIM. ALL HIS LIFE JOHN HENRICKS HAD BEEN SEARCHING FOR SOMEONE COMPLETELY PURE, SOMEONE COMPLETELY UNSULLIED BY LIFE... AND BY MEN! IN FASCINATION, HE LISTENED AS SHE SPoke—

— I RECEIVED THE HIGHEST MARKS IN MY CLASS! AND I'LL WORK HARD... **REALLY!** I'M SURE I COULD MAKE YOU AN EFFICIENT SECRETARY IF YOU'LL ONLY GIVE ME A CHANCE!



JULIE ADAMS FINISHED HER LITTLE SPEECH AND SAT NERVOUSLY, GAZING INTO HER LAP. JOHN HENRICKS SUDDENLY REALIZED HE HAD BEEN STARING AT HER AND BOUNDED HIMSELF...

I HAD BEEN HOPEING TO FIND A SECRETARY WITH SOME... **EXPERIENCE!** HOWEVER, I'M SURE YOU'LL DO NICELY! WELCOME ADAMS... YOU'RE HIRED!

OH, MR. HENRICKS, I'M SO **FABULOUS!** YOU WON'T BE WORRIED I PROMISE YOU?



JOHN HENDRICKS HAD NEVER DREAMED ANY GIRL COULD COME TO MEAN SO MUCH TO HIM IN SO SHORT A TIME. SHE DOMINATED HIS EVERY THOUGHT, AND FIRED A BURNING JEALOUSY WHEN HE SAW HER WITH ANYONE ELSE...

MR. DONLIS, I'LL THANK YOU NOT TO MAKE MISS ADAMS' DESK A SPOT FOR SOCIALITIES! REMEMBER... THIS IS A BUSINESS OFFICE!

OH, YES, SIR? I'M SORRY, MR. HENDRICKS!



HE MOVED JULIE INTO HIS PRIVATE OFFICE WHERE HE COULD BE CERTAIN THE OFFICE WOLVES WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO DESTROY HER PURITY. BUT EVEN THEN...

I'D LIKE TO LEAVE NOW, MR. HENDRICKS? I HAVE A DATE TONIGHT?

A DATE? ER, WHY... I, AH, I'M VERY SORRY, MISS ADAMS, BUT YOU'LL HAVE TO CALL IT OFF! I... I JUST REMEMBERED SOME IMPORTANT WORK THAT MUST BE DONE TONIGHT!



IN EVERY WAY POSSIBLE, JOHN DID ALL HE COULD TO KEEP HER FROM OTHER MEN... TO KEEP HER AS CLEAN AND WHOLESALE AS HE WANTED HER TO BE... FOR HIMSELF... AND HE WORDED DEEPLY.

JULIE, MY JULIE! I MUST PROTECT YOU FROM YOUR OWN INNOCENCE? NO ONE MUST SPOIL YOU! NO ONE!



HE KNEW SHE WAS SO NAIVE THAT ANY FAST-TALKING MAN WOULD FIND HER EASY PREY, AND HE WANTED TO SAVE HER FROM SUCH A FATE...

I CAN'T MAKE HER WORK LATE EVERY NIGHT? AND WHAT ABOUT WEEKENDS? THERE MUST BE A WAY...



HE COULD THINK OF BUT ONE WAY... ONLY ONE *SAFE* METHOD...

ER... JULIE, I HOPE YOU WON'T THINK ME TOO FORWARD... BUT... WOULD YOU HAVE DINNER WITH ME TONIGHT?

WHY, MR. HENDRICKS? I'D BE DELIGHTED!



HE HAD TO MAKE SURE THAT HE WAS ALWAYS WITH HER... HE HAD TO MONITOR HER EVERY MINUTE!

I... I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT LIKE TO GO SOMEONE TONIGHT? AND TOMORROW NIGHT WE COULD SEE A SNOW!

OH, IT SOUNDS WONDERFUL!



EVERY WEEKEND HE TOOK HER FAR FROM THE CITY... FAR FROM ANY SIGHT OF OR CONTACT WITH MEN...



HE WAS MADLY IN LOVE! EVERY IDEALISTIC DREAM HE EVER HAD ABOUT WOMEN WAS EMBODIED IN THE LOVELY YOUNG GIRL NAMED JULIE. HE WANTED TO MARRY HER... HE ASKED TO MARRY HER, TO KEEP HER FOR HIMSELF!



IT WAS IMMEDIATELY AFTER THEIR HONEYMOON THAT JOHN BROUGHT JULIE TO LIVE AT HIS BEAUTIFUL COUNTRY ESTATE, SURROUNDED BY MILES OF WOODLANDS... AND COMPLETELY ISOLATED FROM ANY MEN...



JULIE SAID NO MORE ABOUT IT, AND JOHN THOUGHT THE MATTER WAS FORGOTTEN. THEN, SOME WEEKS LATER...

JOHN? WHAT ON EARTH IS THE MATTER?

MR. FARNWORTH, ONE OF MY BIGGEST CLIENTS, IS COMING TO VISIT US TONIGHT. HIS WIFE AND CHILDREN HAVE COME TO EUROPE, AND HE'S **LOVELY!** WHY HE PRACTICALLY FORCED ME TO ASK HIM OVER? I COULDN'T REFUSE!



TO JULIE, THIS WAS AS EXCITING AS HER WEDDING DAY! SHE FAIRLY BUBBLED OVER WITH HAPPINESS AS SHE LISTENED ATTENTIVELY TO MR. FARNWORTH'S CHATTER.

YES...NOTHING LIKE CHILDREN TO MAKE A HOUSE A HOME! THEY KEEP YOU YOUNG, DON'T THEY? **JOHN!** THAT'S YOUR TRAVEL, JOHN! NO CHILDREN! **AM?** WHY DON'T YOU TALK TO HIM ABOUT IT, JULIE? **HA!**



MR. FARNWORTH VISITED THEM ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS, AND JOHN HAD TO STRUGGLE DESPERATELY TO CONTROL HIS SEETHING JEALOUSY...

YOU LOOK LOVELIER THAN EVER, JOHN. JULIE, MY DEAR!

WHY, THANK YOU, MR. FARNWORTH!



AND SEVERAL TIMES THE TALKATIVE MR. FARNWORTH WOULD BRING UP THE DELICATE SUBJECT...

NO CHILDREN JOHN? YOU'RE NOT GETTING ANY FOUNDER, YOU KNOW?

ER...NOT YET, SIR! MAYBE SOON?



AND SEVERAL TIMES, AFTER MR. FARNWORTH HAD RETURNED HOME...

...BUT I'M A WOMAN, JOHN! I WANT TO BE A MOTHER! I WANT A CHILD... **EARLY!**

NO, JULIE! NO! I DON'T WANT TO HEAR OF IT! PLEASE DON'T ASK ANYMORE!



EXTREMELY DOWNHEARTED, JULIE SAID NO MORE. SHE TURNED AND SILENTLY LEFT THE ROOM, LEAVING JOHN ALONE WITH HIS AGONY. THOUGH HE WOULDN'T ADMIT IT, HE DIDN'T WANT CHILDREN BECAUSE HE COULDN'T BEAR THE THOUGHT OF ANYONE SHARING HER LOVE...

JULIE...OH MY JULIE! WHAT AM I GOING TO DO? WHAT AM I GOING TO DO?



IT WAS A FEW WEEKS LATER THAT JOHN BECAME AWARE OF A FACT THAT STARTLED HIM...

THERE GOES JULIE RUNNING OFF INTO THE WOODS? **HMM...** THIS IS THE SECOND SATURDAY THAT SHE...



HE WAITED UNTIL SHE RETURNED,
HOURS LATER, FROM THE WOODS...

SHE'S BEEN MEETING FARNSWORTH?
SHE'S FALLEN FOR HIM BECAUSE HE
LIKES CHILDREN? IT HAD TO BE
HIM? SHE DOESN'T KNOW ANY
OTHER MEN!



DAYS LATER, AT JOHN'S OFFICE...

OH, HELLO, MR. FARNSWORTH? WHY
CERTAINLY! WE'D BE GLAD TO
HAVE YOU FOR DINNER TOMORROW!
ABOUT EIGHT O'CLOCK FINE!



BUT EARLY THAT EVENING, WHILE
MR. FARNSWORTH WAS FINISHING
SOME WORK BEFORE VISITING JOHN'S
HOME...



WHO... WHO'S
THERE?!

IN A FURIOUS ASSAULT, JOHN POUNDED AND BATTERED
MR. FARNSWORTH UNTIL HIS HAIRING JEALOUSY HAD SPENT,
AND THE OLDER MAN LAY UNMOVING ON THE FLOOR...



THERE? THAT'LL TEACH
YOU TO TAKE INHERITANCE
OF MY WIFE!

LATER THAT NIGHT, BOTH HE AND JULIE FACED THE
FLOOR, BUT FOR VERY DIFFERENT REASONS...



BUT IT'S ALMOST
NINE-TENNY, JOHN!
MR. FARNSWORTH
HAS NEVER BEEN
THIS LATE!

WHAT SHE'S
WORKING! JUST
WHAT TELL SHE
DIES TOMORROW
HEADLINES?

YOU'RE RIGHT,
JULIE! I GUESS
HE COULDN'T
MAKE IT! LET'S
GET SOME SLEEP!

THE NEXT MORNING, JOHN HENDRICKS HEAD THE HEAD-
LINES, THEN HANDED THE PAPER TO HIS WIFE. HE WATCHED
HER FACE CLOSELY FOR ANY TELL-TALE EXPRESSION...



OH, GOOD HEAVENS, JOHN! IT SAYS
HERE THAT MR. FARNSWORTH WAS
MURDERED BY A *STRANGLER* LAST
NIGHT! ISN'T THAT AWFUL?



HE WAS SUCH A *GOOD SLEUT*
OF YOURS! IT WOULD BE A
SHAME IF THIS HURTS YOUR
BUSINESS IN ANY WAY! YOU?
SUCH A *WIFE* OLD MAN!

OH, YES? YES...

THOUGH DISAPPOINTED WHEN HIS WIFE SHOWED NO SIGN OF DEEP GRIEF BECAUSE OF MR FARNSWORTH'S DEATH, HE WAS ALSO PUZZLED BY HER CALM ACCEPTANCE OF IT UNTIL THE FOLLOWING SATURDAY...



WHA...? GOOD HEAVENS!
JULIE'S GOING OFF INTO
THE WOODS AGAIN!

FRANTICALLY, HE
RACED OUT OF
THE HOUSE INTO
THE WOODS... BUT
SHE WAS NOWHERE
IN SIGHT...



...NO USE TRYING
TO FIND HER NOW!
I'LL WAIT UNTIL NEXT
SATURDAY!

HE RETURNED TO THE HOUSE, THE
TEARS OF ANGER ROLLING DOWN
HIS CHEEKS...

I... I DON'T UNDERSTAND! IF SHE'S
STILL MEETING SOME MAN, THEN...
THEN MAYBE SHE NEVER MET
FARNSWORTH AT ALL! DID
I KILL THE WRONG MAN?



...JULIE, I'LL NEVER LET ANYONE
ELSE HAVE YOU! I CAN'T BEAR
THE THOUGHT OF ANOTHER MAN
BEING NEAR YOU! I'LL KILL
HIM, JULIE! I'LL FIND HIM...
AND KILL HIM! I SWEAR IT!



AS USUAL, THE FOLLOWING WEEK,
JULIE DISAPPEARED INTO THE TREES,
WITH HER SMALL BASKET... BUT THIS
TIME JOHN WAS TRAILING CLOSE
BEHIND HER, AN UGLY GUN IN HIS
POCKET...



SHE RAN LIGHTLY IN AND OUT AMONG THE TREES AND
HE KEPT HER IN SIGHT ONLY WITH DIFFICULTY! HE
KEPT TRYING TO MAKE HIMSELF BELIEVE THAT HE WAS
ALL WRONG... THAT IT WAS HIS INSANE JEALOUSY
THAT CAUSED HIM TO THINK SUCH FILTHY THINGS ABOUT
HIS PREVIOUS JULIE...



...BUT HE KNEW HE HAD BEEN RIGHT WHEN HE SAW
HER REACH THE CREST OF A SMALL HILL... SHE STOOD
MOTIONLESS FOR A MOMENT, THEN HAPPILY RAISED HER
ARM, WAVING AND CALLING A GREETING TO THE SOME-
ONE OUT OF SIGHT BEYOND THE HILL...



THROUGH A STREAM OF TEARS, HE SAW HER BEGIN TO REMOVE HER BLOUSE AS SHE DISAPPEARED DOWN THE OTHER SIDE OF THE HILL, TOWARD HER COMPANION! HE SLUMPED TO THE GROUND NEARLY...



HE SAT THERE, SOBING QUIETLY, LISTENING TO HER BRILLIANT LAUGHTER FLEAT UP OVER THE HILL, WHILE HORROR VISIONS OF WHAT WAS TAKING PLACE RACED THROUGH HIS MIND! THE LAUGHTER DEED TO BE REPLACED BY INTERMINABLE DUST, BROKEN ONLY BY AN OCCASIONAL GIGGLE... A SIGAL OF JOY...



A LONG TIME LATER, HE SAW HER REAPPEAR AT THE HILL CREST, RADIANT AND SMILING, AND BUTTORING HER BLOUSE! SHE WAVED GOOD-BYE, BLEW A KISS FROM Dainty FINGERTIPS AND HURRIED BACK TOWARD THE HOUSE, HER LITTLE BASKET SWINGING GAILY IN THE SUN. JOHN PICKED THE GUN UP FROM THE GROUND...



THERE WERE NO TEARS NOW... ONLY HATRED! DEEP, VENOMOUS, MANIACAL HATRED! WITH THE SUN CRIPPLED TENTLY, HE CREEPT STEALTHILY TO THE TOP OF THE HILL.



HE CAUGHT A MOVEMENT BEHIND A CLAMP OF BUSHES! THROUGH THE LEAVES HE SAW THE COLOR OF FLESH AND HE AIMED THE GUN AND FIRED... AGAIN AND AGAIN AND AGAIN!



HE RAN HYSTERICALLY FROM THE HILL, BACK THROUGH THE TREES TO THE HOUSE! IT WAS OVER! JULIE WAS HIS AGAIN!



HE WAS EXHAUSTED AS HE HEARDED THE HOUSE AND SAW JULIE...

OH, THERE YOU ARE! I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR YOU! PLEASE, DEAR, WALK WITH ME!
I... I HAVE... I HAVE SOMETHING TO TELL YOU!

OH, WHY...?



SHE LED HIM BACK INTO THE WOODS. HE HESITATED AT FIRST, THEN WENT WITH HER! WHY NOT? HE HAD NOTHING TO FEAR...

I... I WANT TO CONFESS SOMETHING, JOAN! I KNOW I SHOULDN'T HAVE DONE IT BEHIND YOUR BACK... BUT, WELL... I COULDN'T HELP IT! YOU KNOW HOW LONELY I WAS!

A CONFESSION. FAT LOT OF GOOD IT WILL DO HER. LONELY? JUST AS WELL IF THEY DID STUMBLE ON HIS BODY... JULIE WOULD BE A GOOD WITNESS!

IT... IT JUST HAPPENS! I WENT SWIMMING BY THE POND ONE DAY, AND THERE HE WAS! I LIKED HIM RIGHT AWAY! HE WAS SO CUTE... JULIE HAD BLUE EYES! YOU, YOU UNDERSTAND DON'T YOU, JOHN?

MAYBE, IF HE HAD TO...

YOU KNOW HOW LONELY I WAS! I WANTED SOMEONE... ANYONE! IT WAS WRONG... BUT HE STARTED TO MEET EVERY SUNDAY...

...HE COULD EVEN PUT THE BLAME...

I DIDN'T WANT TO DO IT BEHIND YOUR BACK... BUT THERE WAS NO OTHER WAY! I KNOW HOW... HOW JEALOUS YOU ARE!

...ON JULIE! WHAT A LIE!

BUT I CAN'T KEEP IT FROM YOU ANY LONGER! YOU'RE A KIDNAP TO KNOW HE'S SO WONDERFUL! I WANT YOU TO MEET HIM!

ME AND I HAVE HAD SUCH FUN, PADDLING AND SWIMMING TOGETHER! HIS NAME IS TOMMY! HE'S FROM THE CUPPERS HOME BEHIND YOUR ESTATE! I KNOW YOU'LL JUST LOVE HIM AND... HE'S JUST STARTED TO MEET YOU!

THE END

in gratitude...

IT WAS AS IF A HUGE BLANKET HAD SUDDENLY FALLEN UPON THE CROWD THAT JAMMED THE STATION PLATFORM, MUSHING THEIR CLAMORING VOICES, STIFLING THEIR LAUGHTER. ALL EYES TURNED TO WHERE THE SHINING RAILS RAN AWAY TOWARD THE HORIZON AND DISAPPEARED INTO THE MIST AT THE FOOTHILLS OF THE DISTANT MOUNTAINS. ALL EARS LISTENED TO THE FAINT WHISTLE OF THE APPROACHING TRAIN. AND THEN, IT WAS AS IF THE BLANKET WERE SUDDENLY LIFTED AGAIN... A BANG BEGAN TO FLUTTER. THE SHOUTING AND LAUGHTER EXPLODED AGAIN... LOUDER THIS TIME...

MARCIA AND ANDREW NOBLE, THE PARENTS, STOOD AMID THE CHEERING SHOOTING CROWD. THERE WERE TEARS OF JOY IN MRS. NOBLE'S EYES, AND MR. NOBLE'S FACE BEAMED...

HE'S GONE HOME, ANDREW. DON'T JOEY'S COME HOME... A HERO?

THE WHOLE TOWN'S PROUD OF HIM, MARCIA... THE WHOLE TOWN! LOOK AT 'EM...

HERE HE COMES! RIGHT ON TIME, TOO!

LET'S GIVE HIM THE BEST BARN WELCOMING THIS TOWN EVER HAD!

LET'S START ABOUT THESE PLAGUE FOLKS! LET'S REALLY PUT ON A SHOW FOR HIM!

WELCOME

THE TRAIN HESITATED AND SHOOK AS IT STEAMED INTO THE STATION AND SCREELED TO A STOP. THE CROWD YELLED AND WAVED AND PUSHED. THE BANG BLAZED. SOMEBODY POINTED... SHOUTING...

THERE HE IS!

WELCOME HOME, JOEY!

JOEY!

WAF WAF

THE BOY SPRANG OFF THE TRAIN AND PUT OUT HIS ARMS AND HIS MOTHER RUSHED INTO THEM AND HUGGED HER CLOSE.



THE MAYOR PUT UP HIS HANDS AND THE BAND STOPPED PLAYING. THE CROWD SILENT.



THE BOY SMILED, WAVED TO THE CROWD, AND POKED UP HIS BARRACKS BAG. THE CROWD PARTED AND HE MOVED TO THE WAITING CAR FLANKED BY HIS BEAMING PARENTS.



HIS FATHER STOOD BY, ARMAROLLY, WRITING AS THE MOTHER KISSED AND KISSED HER RETURNED HERO SON, AND THEN



THE FATHER HELD OUT HIS RIGHT HAND, THE BOY RESPONDED AUTOMATICALLY... THEN HE STOPPED... THE FATHER STARED AT THE BLEEMING METAL CLAMP...



THE CROWD CHIERED. THE MAYOR HELD UP HIS HANDS AGAIN.



THE CAR DOOR SLAMMED. THE BAND BEGAN TO PLAY AGAIN, AND THE CROWD ROARED AS THEIR RETURNED HERO WAS WAVED OFF.



MRS. MORRIS PUTTERED HAPPILY OVER THE KITCHEN STOVE, CHATTERING GAILY AND WIPING AWAY AN OCCASIONAL TEAR OF JOY...

I MADE EVERYTHING YOU LIKE, JOEY! ROAST BEEF... FRENCH FRIES... BROCCOLI... APPLE PIE WITH ICE CREAM.

SOUNDS GREAT, MA!



THE PARENTS SAT QUIETLY, PICKING AT THEIR FOOD, WATCHING JOEY FEAST RAVENOUSLY, MARVELING AT THE WAY HE MANIPULATED HIS FORK WITH THE SHINY CLAMP...

GOES... DOES IT HURT MUCH, JOEY?

WHAT, MA? OH? THIS? HAH? I'M USED TO IT NOW. IN THE BEGINNING IT WAS TOUGH... BUT NOW...



THE BOY PUT DOWN HIS FORK ON THE EMPTY PLATE BEFORE HIM AND SAT BACK, SATED. HE LOOKED AROUND, GRINNING... DRINKING IN THE FAMILIAR SCENE... THE FAMILIAR SMELLS...

IT'S GOOD TO BE HOME AGAIN, MA, PA!

IT'S GOOD TO HAVE YOU HOME AGAIN, JOEY!



HE LOOKED AT HIS WATCH...

IT'S TWO-FIFTEEN. WE HAVE PLENTY OF TIME TILL THE RALLY. I... I THINK IT'S LIKE TO GO OUT TO AMM'S GRAVE FIRST!

HARK! GRAVE?



THE PARENTS PALED. THE SON LOOKED AT THEM...

THAT'S RIGHT, PA! I'D KINDA LIKE TO STOP BY AND SEE IT BEFORE WE GO ON TO THE RALLY, YOU KNOW...

WH... SURE, SON? SURE?



THE SON STOOD UP...

WHAT'S WRONG, MA, PA? MA? PA? BOTHERING YOU?

NOTHING, JOEY!

IT'S... IT'S JUST...



THE MOTHER TOOK HER SON'S HAND...

WE MEANT TO WRITE YOU ABOUT IT, JOEY! WE MEANT TO TELL YOU! BUT WE - WE JUST COULDN'T BRING OURSELVES TO DO IT!

SIT DOWN, JOEY! YOU MIGHT AS WELL KNOW IT... NOW.



THE HERO SAT DOWN... HE LOOKED UP AT HIS PARENTS STANDING OVER HIM...



WHAT HAPPENED, PAT? COULDN'T YOU SWING IT? DIDN'T HIS BODY GET HERE?

IT ISN'T THAT, SON! IT'S... IT'S...

THE FATHER'S VOICE WAVED. THE MOTHER TOOK UP THE STORY...



ALL THOSE LETTERS YOU WROTE, JOEY? YOU NEVER MENTIONED IT! IT WASN'T FAIR! WE GREW TO LOVE HANK FROM YOUR LETTERS!

HE WAS MY BUDDY, MA! I LOVED HIM LIKE A BROTHER. WE WENT THROUGH IT ALL SIDE BY SIDE...

THE FATHER BEGAN AGAIN...



WE KNOW SON, BUT...

WE PICTURED HIM SO DIFFERENT, JOEY! WHEN YOU WROTE ABOUT HIM WE PICTURED HIM... WELL...

'WHEN YOU WROTE ABOUT THAT PATROL YOU WERE SENT ON, WE COULD JUST SEE YOU BOTH... TRAMPING THROUGH THE MUD TOGETHER...'



WHAT THE...?

HIT THE DIRT!

ENEMY MACHINE GUN!

'AND WHEN THE ENEMY MACHINE-GUN CUT YOUR PATROL OFF... FINISHED IT DOWN, WE COULD JUST PICTURE YOU AND HANK VOLUNTEERING TO PUT IT OUT OF COMMISSION... NO CRAWLING OFF...'



KEEP YOUR HEADS DOWN, FELLERS.

WE'LL TAKE CARE OF 'EM, LIEUTENANT!

WE GOINT BACK, LIEUTENANT!

'WE WERE SO PROUD OF YOU BOTH, JOEY... TOS-ING THOSE GRENADES... SILENCING THAT GUN...'



THAT DID IT, HANK!

LOOK OUT, JOEY!

'AND WHEN THE LIVE GRENADE LANDED BESIDE YOU AND HANK LEANED UPON IT... COVERING IT WITH HIS BODY... SAVING YOUR LIFE...'



HER MOTHER HUNG HER HEAD...

...WE CRIED WHEN WE HEARD ABOUT IT, JOEY! WE CRIED!

NOT BECAUSE YOU LOST YOUR ARM, JOEY! WE CRIED BECAUSE HANK GAVE HIS LIFE TO SAVE YOURS!

...AND WHEN YOU WROTE HOME THAT HANK HAD NO FAMILY AND ASKED THAT WE SEND FOR HIS BODY SO HE COULD BE BURIED IN OUR FAMILY PLOT AT FAIRLAWN...

...WE DID IT, JOEY. HAPPILY!

WE EVEN ARRANGED TO HAVE HIS BODY TRANSFERRED FROM THE SIMPLE WOODEN COFFIN THE GOVERNMENT SUPPLIED...

WE BOUGHT A REAL NICE GARRET, JOEY! EVERYTHING WAS SET...



ONLY THE NIGHT BEFORE HANK'S FUNERAL, THE UNDERTAKER CALLED... AND TOLD US!

WE...WE DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO!

AND BY MORNING THE WHOLE TOWN HAD HEARD...

THE PHONE DIDN'T STOP RINGING...



THE SOLDIER-HERO SAT THERE... STUNNED... LISTENING.

WE COULDN'T GO THROUGH WITH IT, JOEY! THE WHOLE TOWN WAS ON OUR NECKS, OUR FRIENDS... THE FAMILY...

I HAD MY BUSINESS TO CONSIDER, SON. WE COULDN'T DO IT!



HE LOOKED UP... WHISPERING HORRIFIED.

THEN... WHAT DID YOU DO?

WHY... WE BURIED HIM OVER IN GREENDALE...

HE'S GOT A NICE PLOT, JOEY! PA BOUGHT HIM THE BEST. MORE THAN WE COULD AFFORD!





THE GATHERED CROWD THAT HAD COME TO HONOR JOEY - ROSE TO ITS FEET, APPLAUDING. JOEY STOOD BEFORE IT, HIS HEAD BOWED...

FINALLY, THE AUDITORIUM QUIETED DOWN, THEIR SOLDIER HERO BEGAN TO SPEAK... HIS VOICE WAS SCARCELY AUDIBLE...



HE LOOKED DOWN AT THESE, HIS TOWNSMENOPEOPLE...

THEY TRAINED ME AND SENT ME TO KOREA. THEY SAID I WAS FIGHTING FOR DEMOCRACY HELPING TO FURH BACK THE TIDE OF SLAVERY THAT THREATENED TO OVERRUN EUROPE AND ASIA... THE WORLD.

HE HELD UP HIS ARM WITH THE STEEL CLAMP...

I GAVE MY RIGHT HAND DEFENDING FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY, AND I WAS PROUD OF IT.

HIS VOICE LOWERED... HIS FACE GREW GRIM...

I WAS PROUD, THAT IS, UNTIL TODAY...



HE LOOKED FROM FACE TO FACE...

I HAD A BUDDY IN KOREA. WE ATE TOGETHER... SLEPT TOGETHER... LAUGHED TOGETHER... CRIED TOGETHER... WE FOUGHT TOGETHER... WE FUGHT FOR DEMOCRACY TOGETHER...



HE SAVED HIS LIFE FOR THAT GUY... AND HE SAVED MINE IN DOING IT... HE THREW HIMSELF ON A LIVE GRENADE... GOT BLOWN UP... TO SAVE ME...



BUT WHEN HIS BODY WAS SENT BACK HERE, IT WASN'T GOOD ENOUGH TO BE BURIED IN FAIR-LARK CEMETERY. IT WASN'T GOOD ENOUGH BECAUSE ITS SKIN WASN'T THE RIGHT COLOR...



WELL, THE GRENADE THAT TORE THAT SKIN TO PIECES DIDN'T SHOW ITS COLOR... DIDN'T CARE IF IT WAS WHITE OR BLACK



WHAT DID HE DIE FOR? WHAT DID I GIVE MY ARM FOR? YOU SAY YOU'RE PROUD OF ME. WELL, I'M NOT PROUD OF YOU, I'M ASHAMED! I'M ASHAMED OF YOU... AND FOR YOU!



THE SOLDIER-HERO SAT DOWN... THERE WAS NO APPLAUSE... NO CHEERS... NO BAND PLAYING. LITTLE BY LITTLE, THE CROWD FILED OUT OF THE AUDITORIUM... QUIETLY... SILENTLY...



... LEAVING THE SOLDIER-HERO ALONE IN THE EMPTY TOWN HALL, LEAVING HIM CRYING...



THE END

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THESE SEALS
WHEN YOU BUY!**

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DEADBEAT!



Dr. Curtis Clark drew his bathrobe tighter around his ample stomach and snorted angrily: "How long does your worthless brother intend to stay here and sponge off us?"

"N-Now, Curt," his wife mumbled from the big bed, "I'll see that Burt doesn't get in your way while he's here. If you'd only try to make allowances for him. He's so proud that you're one of the country's most eminent botanists..."

"Phui!" rasped Dr. Clark. "He's nothing but a worthless bum who's never done a day's work in his life! Only reason he's visiting is to satisfy that bottomless pit he calls his stomach!"

.

Burt Devine tiptoed silently down the stairs and into the kitchen. With great care he flipped the light switch and moved across the room. An audible grunt came from him as he stopped in his tracks: that pompous brother-in-law of his had put a padlock on the refrigerator! What was a guy supposed to do when he hankered for a midnight snack? Burt moved toward the pantry and his hand closed around the doorknob. That crummy Clark, he thought to himself with disgust... he's even locked up the pantry! Not a speck of food around, and I'm starving to death after that stingy little snack they call dinner at this dump!

A thought struck Burt Devine and, switching off the kitchen light, he

walked silently toward the rear of the house . . . to the glassed-in porch where Clark did his at-home experimenting. In the greenhouse, Burt reflected, he might find some tidbits left behind by his sister's cheap husband.

The door opened quietly and Burt stepped into the workroom: a quick search revealed nothing to eat. About to exit in disgust, Burt saw a wooden box set on a worktable. Closer examination brought a smile to his heavy face: his eyes lit up, his mouth gaped in a grin, the corners of his eyes crinkled with good humor. Digging his hands deep into the soil, he pulled up a fistful of the objects planted there.

"This is better than I hoped for," Burt rejoiced. "Just what I need to satisfy my craving for a late snack: MUSHROOMS! If there's anything I adore, it's a feast of luscious, tender, succulent mushrooms! Yum!"

And, sulking actions to word, Burt Devine proceeded to clean out the box. In a few minutes, smacking his lips with obvious delight, he closed the greenhouse door and tiptoed upstairs to his bedroom. What a laugh on stuffy old Clark!

Dr. Clark rose from the breakfast table. "First time in memory," he said, "that your brother missed a meal!" With that he strode toward the greenhouse, while his wife tidied up the kitchen. Within a minute Clark was back, his face crimson. "T-That special strain of TOADSTOOLS I've been working on," he spluttered, "t-they're all gone! Must've been dug up last night! I-I hope the dog didn't get in and eat them! Those toadstools are highly poisonous! One mouthful and . . . brrr! I hate to think of the agony that will precede death within two hours of the time they're eaten!



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SHOCK TALK

The only shocking thing about this column is that it's probably no shock! You've no doubt seen it two or three times in previous E.C. issues. But if ya haven't yet heard about E.C.'s new fan club, why read on!

Before launching into the sordid details of the club, however, we would like to sketch in a little background. We started out with two conditions that positively had to be met:

1) Our club would have to be a different kind of fan club . . . a continuously active club that would provide long-range interest, enjoyment and benefits for its members! And . . .

2) Our club would have to be a non-profit fan club! Incredible as it may seem, the only income we at E.C. derive . . . or care to derive . . . from our efforts comes from the newsstand sales of our 10¢ mags. We actually lose a little on subscriptions, and make very little on the annuals . . . both are primarily offered as services to promote good will! If you readers want a fan club, we're more than happy to oblige . . . but, again, as a service, not for profit!

So here's what we've come up with:

1) **THE NAME:** As one reader wrote a while back, "E.C. magazines are habit-forming." So what could be more logical than to call the organization, "THE E.C. FAN-ADDICT CLUB"?

2) **THE SET-UP:** The E.C. Fan-Addict Club will consist of the national "parent" organization, and local chapters. Everyone who joins will be a member of the national organization. In addition, any group of five or more prospective members may join as an authorized chapter of the national organization. Each such chapter will be assigned a charter number. The name and address of the elected president of each authorized chapter will be made available to all members, so that those who are not already a member of a chapter will be able to join the one nearest them if they wish to.

3) **WHAT YOU GET:** Each member will receive a full-color 7½ by 10½ membership certificate, suitable for framing; a wallet-size membership identification card; a striking membership patch for sweaters, jackets, etc.;

and a very distinguished-looking membership pin!

4) **COST OF JOINING:** Membership in THE E.C. FAN-ADDICT CLUB will set you back two bits . . . 25¢! This 25¢ represents the exact cost to us (plus or minus a fraction of a cent!) of one envelope, one stamp, and the above mentioned four items . . . certificate, card, patch, and pin! (The cost of Ruby's and Nancy's loving labor in packing and mailing is lovingly donated by E.C.)

5) **POSSIBLE FUTURE PLANS:** We are considering publishing an E.C. FAN-ADDICT CLUB BULLETIN, containing such features of national and local chapter news; advance inside information on new titles, future stories, and special issues, etc.; articles and stories submitted by members, and a "back-issue trading post." Only club members would be eligible to subscribe, with the price and frequency of publication yet to be decided upon.

We are also considering some sort of "E.C. Surprise-of-the-Month" plan for members. What the surprises might be, and what we might have to clip you for THIS one, is also as yet undetermined.

6) **IF YOU'RE STILL INTERESTED:** For an individual membership, send 25¢, along with your clearly printed name and address, to:

THE E.C. FAN-ADDICT CLUB
Room 706
215 Lafayette Street
N.Y.C. 12, N.Y.

If five or more of you wish to join as an authorized chapter, enclose each member's name and address, along with 25¢ for each name, and indicate the name of the elected president. We will notify each president of his chapter's charter number . . . but each chapter member will receive his membership credentials, etc., individually.

So that's it! Meet new friends. Make new enemies. See the world. Spend money. Join THE E.C. FAN-ADDICT CLUB!!

(In honor of the occasion, we will forgo the usual subscription plug that 6 issues of this, or any other E.C. mag, cost 75¢—ed.)

The **SPACE SUITORS**

IT WAS ALMOST TIME. WANDA TURNED AND LOOKED BACK ACROSS THE DESOLATE PEBBLED PLATEAU TO WHERE THE SHIP STOOD, TALL AND SILENT AND SILVERY... A MONUMENT TO LIFE IN A DEAD ATMOSPHERELESS WORLD. THEN SHE LOOKED DOWN AT MILTON, HER WEALTHY MIDDLE-AGED HUSBAND, CROUCHING AWKWARDLY BEFORE HER IN HIS HEAVY RUBBER-REINFORCED SPACE-SUIT, STUDYING THE SAMPLE OF PLANETOID ROCK. **COLD MILTON**, AS EMPTY AND BARREN AS THE WORLD THEY'D TRAVELED ACROSS THE VOID OF ENDLESS SPACE TO EXPLORE, AND THEN SHE LOOKED AT DONALD, HER HUSBAND'S YOUNG AND HANDSOME EMPLOYEE, STANDING BEHIND HER, **SMILING** OSWALD... VIBRANT AND EXCITING, WITH WHOM SHE'D PLANNED ALL THIS... WITH WHOM SHE'D PLANNED **COLD MILTON'S DEATH**.

WANDA STIFFENED. MILTON WAS SETTING UP SLOWLY. IT WAS ALMOST TIME NOW. HE'D LOOKED AT THE ONE SAMPLE AND NOW HE KNEW... HE KNEW DON HAD LIED TO HIM. **YES, IT WAS ALMOST TIME TO KILL HIM...**



I DON'T UNDERSTAND, SON! YOU TOLD ME THIS PLANETOID WAS LOADED WITH URANIUM BEARING ORE!

I KNOW MILT. I KNOW WHAT I TOLD YOU!



THEN IT'S TRUE! THERE IS NO URANIUM ORE ON THIS GOD-FORGOTTEN ROCK?

I'M AFRAID NOT, WIL.

WANDA SHIVERED. EVEN THOUGH HER SPACE-SUIT WAS PADDED WITH FINE WIRES THAT RELIEVED THE POCKET OF AIR BETWEEN ITS RUBBED SURFACE AND HER SMOOTH WHITE BODY, SHE SHIVERED. MILT STARED AT THE GUN SHE HELD IN HIS SLOWED FIST.



WHAT'S THIS ALL ABOUT, SON? WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

IT MEANS YOU'RE GOING TO DIE, MILT. IT MEANS WANDA AND I WILL BE RID OF YOU!

A SCIENCE-FICTION SUSPENSORY

MILT LAUGHED. HIS LAUGHTER RASPED OVER THE INTERCOM, RINGING OUT OF THE TINY SPEAKER IN WANDA'S SPACE-HELMET...



WHAT'S SO FUNNY, MILT?

YOU TWO? YOU'VE BEEN SO CLEVER! WELL, I'VE BEEN CLEVERER!

WANDA SCREAMED...



WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR, DON? DON'T LISTEN TO HIM! HE'S TRYING TO STALL US! PULL THE TRIGGER...

YES, DON'T PULL THE TRIGGER! WILL HE! SEE WHAT HAPPENS!

WANDA MOVED FORWARD, HATE BURNING IN HER EYES. SHE LEAPED AT HER HUSBAND...



I'LL TELL YOU WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN! MILTON! AFTER YOU'RE DEAD, DON AND I ARE GOING BACK TO THE SHIPYARD AND WE'RE GOING TO TAKE OFF OUR SUITS AND HE'S GOING TO TAKE ME IN HIS ARMS AND...

DON'T YOU THINK I KNEW ALL THIS, WANDA? DON'T YOU THINK I KNEW ABOUT YOU AND DON?



NO, MILTON IF YOU KNEW, YOU WOULDN'T HAVE COME! YOU WOULDN'T HAVE WALKED INTO THIS TRAP!

YOU'RE WRONG, WANDA. I KNEW I'D LOSE YOU! I KNEW IF THAT DON GAVE TO GOOF FOR ME AND I SAW THAT NUMBER IN YOUR EYES...

WANDA STARED AT MILTON. HER THOUGHTS WENT RACING WILDLY... BACK ACROSS THOSE TORTUROUS MONTHS... BACK ACROSS THOSE MONTHS OF LONGING AND FRUSTRATION... BACK TO THE BEGINNING...



WANDA... THIS IS DONALD CONRAD. DON IS A SPACE-EXPLORER. I'VE HIRED HIM TO DO SOME PROSPECTING FOR ME...

A PLEASURE, MR. CONRAD...

HAD SHE BEEN SO OBVIOUS? HAD MILTON ACTUALLY SEEN THE GLOW OF THE PASSION-FIRE THAT DON HAD STURRED WITHIN HER?...
 YES! I KNOW! IT'S HIS WHOLE LIFE. HE HARDLY HAS TIME FOR ANYTHING ELSE!



YOUR HUSBAND IS INTERESTED IN URANIUM, MRS. GRIFFITH...

YES! I KNOW! IT'S HIS WHOLE LIFE. HE HARDLY HAS TIME FOR ANYTHING ELSE!

WANDA REMEMBERED HOW SHE'D THOUGHT ABOUT DON AFTER THAT, AND HOW THE FIRE WITHIN HER HAD LEAPED INTO A FLAMING INFERNAL OF DESIRE...



IT WAS NICE OF YOU TO INVITE ME TO DINNER, WANDA!

MILT TOLD ME YOU WERE LEAVING TOMORROW, AND I THOUGHT WE'D GIVE YOU A NICE SEND-OFF...

SHE REMEMBERED THOSE STOLEN MOMENTS TOGETHER... OUT ON THE BALCONY... WHILE MILT WAS MIXING DRINKS...



PLEASE... TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF, DON'T I WOULD'N'T WANT TO LOSE YOU NOW THAT I'VE FOUND YOU...

BABY...

...THE THRILL OF THEIR FIRST KISS... THE TEMPTING ENTREE TO THE FEAST OF LOVE THAT AID TO FOLLOW...



OH, DON'T I'VE DYED FOR SINCE THE FIRST MOMENT I SAW YOU... LOVED YOU... AND WANTED YOU! MOST YOU GO TOMORROW?

I'VE GOT TO! BUT WHEN I GET BACK WE'LL... COUGH... WATCH IT! HE'S COMING!

...THOSE INTERMINABLE MONTHS OF WAITING UNTIL DON CAME BACK... THE FORTUNE OF CREATING HIM AT THE POCKET PORT... WITH MILT.



HI, POLK!

WELCOME BACK, DON! WELL, FANTASY LOCK?

...THE PAIR OF BEING SO NEAR HIM AND NOT BEING ABLE TO THROW HERSELF INTO HIS ARMS...

I FOUND A BORGARZA, MILT! A PLANETON LOADED WITH URANIUM-BEARING ORE...

GREAT! GREAT!



...THE WHISPERED PLEAS...

I'VE GOT TO SEE YOU, TOMORROW, MILT WON'T BE HOME, COME UP ABOUT ELEVEN...

I'VE GOT TO SEE YOU, TOMORROW, A BETTER PLAN, WANDA, TRUST ME...



...LISTENING ALL THAT EVENING TO DON AND MILT TALKING BUSINESS... MURDERING... LONGING FOR THIS MAN...



...IT'S A LITTLE ATMOSPHERELESS PLANETON OUTSIDE OF SOLAR SYSTEM X-5-15. OF COURSE, WE'LL HAVE TO WEAR SPACE-SUITS...

I'LL MAKE ARRANGEMENTS TO GO WITH YOU AND TAKE A LOOK...

...AND THEN, FINALLY, THAT SWEET MOMENT ALONE... THAT ONE OPPORTUNITY...



SWEETHEART! I'VE THOUGHT ABOUT YOU EVERY MINUTE THAT YOU WERE AWAY... WANTED YOU... DREAMED OF IT...

LISTEN! WE DON'T HAVE MUCH TIME! I'VE GOT A PLAN...

WANDA REMEMBERED HOW DON'D OUTLINED HIS PLAN...

NO ONE WILL SUSPECT FOUL PLAY BABY! THERE IS NO MOTIVE! NO ONE KNOWS ABOUT US!

BUT DON'T THAT MEANS WE'VE GOT TO BE SO CAREFUL

EXACTLY! THAT'S WHY I CAN'T COME UP TOMORROW WHEN BET'S AWAY! WE'VE GOT TO WAIT BABY! WE CAN'T AFFORD TO TAKE CHANCES!

WU... DON! WE'VE WAITED ALL THESE MONTHS... WHILE YOU WERE GONE.

WE CAN'T WAIT JUST A LITTLE WHILE LONGER, WANDA, HONEY! JUST A LITTLE WHILE LONGER...

HOLD ME... KISS ME...



HAD MILTON REALLY KNOWN? HAD HE SUSPECTED? WANDA COULDN'T BELIEVE IT! THEY'D BEEN SO CAREFUL! ASIDE FROM THOSE BRIEF STOLEN RECORDS ALONE, THEY'D BEHAVED LIKE STRANGERS.

WANDA! I HAVE AN EXCELLENT IDEA! WHY DON'T YOU COME ALONG WITH ME WHEN I GO TO EXAMINE DON'S DISCOVERY?

GO ALONG, MILT? WHY, WHY, WOULDNT I BE IN THE WAY?



NONSENSE! WANDA WOULDN'T BE IN THE WAY, WOULD SHE, COMRADE?

OF COURSE NOT! MILT YOU COME ALONG, MRS. GREYHILL, YOU'LL ENJOY THE TRIP, I'M SURE!



HAD MILTON HAD AN ULTIMATE MOTIVE IN INVITING WANDA ON THE TRIP? HAD HE FIGURED OUT ABOUT THEIR PLAN TO KILL HIM?

WHY DID YOU GO THAT? WHY DID YOU SAY 'YES' TO MY COMING ALONG?

IT'S A LONG TRIP HOME, BABY! A LONG TRIP...



WANDA REMEMBERED THE EXCITEMENT... THE ANTICIPATION! NOT OF THE TRIP TO THE PLANETOID THAT WOULD BE SURE TORTURE! BUT THE TRIP HOME WITH MILT DEAD... AND SHE AND DON... TOGETHER!

OF COURSE, IF YOU'D RATHER NOT GO, WANDA

DON'T BE SILLY, MILT I WANT TO GO!



MILTON'S LAUGH, ECHOING INSIDE WANDA'S SPACE-HELMET, SHOOKED HER OUT OF HER REVERIE...SHOOKED HER BACK TO THE BARREN ROCKY PLANETOID...

YES, WANDA. I *KNEW* I'D *LOST* YOU. THAT'S WHY I *CAME!* I *WANTED* TO *DIE*. THERE WAS NOTHING *LEFT* FOR ME WITHOUT YOU...



AND YOU'RE *WRONG*, WANDA! *AFTER* I'M *DEAD*, YOU'RE *NOT* GOING BACK TO THE *SHIP*. YOU'RE *NOT* GOING TO GET WHAT YOU WANT. THAT'S *NOT* WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN AT ALL.



MILT POINTED TO A SWITCH ON HIS SPACE-SUIT BELT-RADIO...

IF I PRESS THIS TOGGLE, THE *SHIP'S* *AUTOMATIC* *PILOT* WILL *SAVE* IT *OFF*...AND YOU'LL BE *LEFT*...*STRANDED* *HERE*...*BOTH* OF YOU...



...AND THERE ISN'T ANY *ATMOSPHERE* ON THIS PLANETOID, SO THERE ISN'T ANY *AIR* *PRESSURE!*



MILT GRINNED...

SO GO *AHEAD*, DON! *PULL* THE *TRIGGER!* *KILL* ME! *SEE* WHAT HAPPENS!

HE'S *LYING*, DON! *HOW* COULD HE *HAVE* *KNOWN?* HE'S TRYING TO *OUTSMART* US!

I DON'T *KNOW*, BABY...



DON...DON, *BALLING!* THINK OF THAT *TRIP* *HOME!* THINK OF HOW *LONG* WE'VE *WAITED!* THINK OF THE *FUTURE* WE'VE BOTH *SUPPOSED*...*WANTING* *EACH* *OTHER* AND *NOT* *BEING* *ABLE* TO...

OKAY, BABY! *DRIFT* *STAND* *ASIDE!*



DON RAISED HIS GUN. HIS GLOVED FINGER TIGHTENED. THERE WAS A *SHARP* *CLICK* AS HE *PULLED* THE *TRIGGER!*



MILT PITCHED FORWARD, THE AIR HISsing FROM HIS RENT SPACE-SUIT, FOUNTAINING HIS BLOOD ACROSS THE ROCKY PLANETOID SURFACE.



AND THEN, SUDDENLY, THE DIS-TANT SHIP SHUDDERED... SPITTING FLAME...



...AND SHOT SKYWARD... UP INTO THE BLACK STAR-STUDDED VOID.



FOR A LONG WHILE, THE MAN AND THE WOMAN JUST STOOD THERE, STARRING AFTER THE FADING MIDDLE OF FIRE.



THEN THEY LOOKED AT THE BODY LYING ON THE PEB-BLES WITH THE BLOATED RUPTURED FACE THAT SEEMED TO SMILE BACK AT THEM...



AND THEN THEY LOOKED AT EACH OTHER HUNGERING AND KNEW THAT WHAT THEY'D KILLED FOR WAS NOW IMPOSSIBLE... THAT THEY WERE CONFINED TO THEIR SUITS... THAT IF THEY TRIED TO REMOVE THEM, THEIR BODIES WOULD BLOAT AND BLISTER AND THEIR BLOOD VESSELS WOULD RUPTURE... THAT THEY COULDN'T EVEN KISS, NO LESS...



AND WHEN THE OTHER SPACE EXPLORERS FINALLY CAME TO THE TINY PEBBLED PLANETOID, THEY FOUND THE MAN AND THE WOMAN SITTING BESIDE EACH OTHER... DEAD FROM SUFFOCATION AND STARVATION... HOLDING BLOATED RUPTURED HANDS...



...THREE'S a CROWD

DELLA HAD BEEN ACTING STRANGELY LATELY... COLD TO MY ADVANCES. IT SEEMED SOMETHING WAS WRONG, BUT I JUST COULDN'T PUT MY FINGER ON IT. WHEN SHE'D SUGGESTED GOING UP TO THE LODGE FOR THE WEEK-END, I'D JUMPED AT THE CHANCE. I'D FELT THAT THE TWO OF US, ALONE UP THERE, COULD STRAIGHTEN OUT whatever HAD COME BETWEEN US. BUT THEN SHE'D DONE TO THE PHONE AND CALLED ANDY AND INVITED HIM UP, TOO.

YES, ANDY. THIS WEEK-END, JUST THE THREE OF US. YES, YOUR CAN'T WELL, IF YOU INSIST. GOOD. SEE YOU FRIDAY NIGHT, THEN. YOU'LL PICK US UP? FINE! 'BYE, DEARY!

DELLA, WHAT'S YOU SO AND DO THAT FOR?



DELLA HUNG UP AND TURNED TO ME INNOCENTLY.

OO WWWT, ALAN?

INVITE ANDY UP! I THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE NICE IF WE WENT UP TO THE LODGE ALONE... JUST THE TWO OF US...



SHE LAUGHED...

AREN'T WE A LITTLE OLD FOR THAT KIND OF THING, ALAN? BESIDES, ANDY IS OUR BEST FRIEND. I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE NICE TO HAVE HIM ALONG.

VERY COLD! AND WHAT'S THIS ABOUT ANDY PICKING YOU UP? YOU KNOW HOW DANGEROUS THOSE ROADS ARE. I PREFER TO DRIVE...



ANDY HAS A NEW CAR, ALAN. HE WANTS TO SHOW IT OFF. I COULDN'T VERY WELL REFUSE HIM...

NOT
NO?
VERY
WELL...

I GUESSED I ACTED PRETTY *CHILDISH* ABOUT THE WHOLE THING, BUT, GUESS FRANKLY, I WAS ANNOYED. OUR ANNIVERSARY WAS COMING UP THAT SUNDAY, AND IT WOULD HAVE BEEN THE PERFECT CHANCE TO CLEAR THE AIR OF WHATEVER IT WAS THAT WAS *BOTHERING* DELLA. BUT SHE'D SOMEHOW INVITED ANDY, AND SPOILED THE WHOLE DEAL. FRIDAY NIGHT, ANDY PULLED UP IN HIS BRAND NEW CONVERTIBLE.

OH, ANDY! IT'S BEAUTIFUL!

Toss your bags in the back and hop in!

SWEET-LOOKING JOB, ANDY.



ALL THE WAY UP TO THE LODGE, ANDY RATTLED ON, PRAISING HIS NEW CAR. AND IT WAS A SWEET JOKE! IT HAD POWER STEERING, POWER BRAKES, REMOTE-CONTROLLED WINDOWS THAT RAISED AND LOWERED AT THE TOUCH OF A BUTTON...

WE'D ALMOST REACHED THE ROAD LEADING TO THE LODGE AS THE BELL STARTED TO RING. ANDY SMILED, LOOKING AT HIS WATCH...

I SAVED THIS FOR THE *niche de advantage!* RIGHT ON TIME, TOO...

IT SOUNDS LIKE...

OH, NO!

YES, SIR. SHE'S GOT EVERYTHING.

WHAT'S THAT, ANDY?

WHAT'S FISSING?



ANDY REACHED UNDER THE DASH-BOARD AND LIFTED OUT THE RECEIVER.

YEP! A BUILT-IN-RADIO TELEPHONE. I LEFT ORDERS WITH MY SECRETARY TO CALL ME AT SEVEN! PARDON ME...

ANDY YOU'RE CRAZY!

HELLO, HONEY? YES? ANY MESSAGES? OOF, SEE YOU MONDAY MORNING? 'BYE!

WELL, I'LL BE...

ANDY HUNG UP. HE GRINNED AT US...

ALWAYS WANTED WATCH IT, ONE OF THOSE THINGS.

ANDY! LIGHT AFTER THE BRIDGE, THE ROAD SWEEPS UP A STEEP GRADE.



WE DROOK ACROSS THE BRIDGE AND THE CAR TOOK THE SHARP CURVE EARLY AND SPED UP THE STEEP MOUNTAIN ROAD.

YOU'LL HAVE TO WATCH THIS SPOT ON THE WAY BACK, ANDY. IT'S PRETTY DANGEROUS. YOU CAN'T SEE THE BRIDGE UNTIL YOU'RE ALMOST ON TOP OF IT!

ANDY, WHAT IN THE WORLD DO YOU NEED A TELEPHONE FOR? YOU NEVER CAN TELL, DELLA. SOMEONE MIGHT WANT TO REACH ME...



ABOUT TEN MILES FURTHER ON, WE TURNED OFF THE MAIN HIGHWAY AND PULLED UP TO THE LODGE. ANDY WAS STILL BRAGGING ABOUT THE CAR-TELEPHONE.

I'LL GIVE YOU THE NUMBER, ALAN, SOON AS WE GET INSIDE. YOU WRITE IT DOWN...

FINE, ANDY! NOW, YOU AND DELLA GO ON IN AND I'LL GET YOUR BAGS OUT OF THE TRUNK!

NO!



DELLA TURNED WHITE. I LOOKED AT HER... THEN AT ANDY...

ER... MY BAGS ARE IN THE BACK SEAT, ALAN! THE PHONE DOESN'T OPEN IT'S... IT'S GOT THE RADIO-TELEPHONE CHAIRS IN THERE.

OH? I SEE...



THE COLOR CAME BACK INTO DELLA'S CHEEKS AND SHE WENT ON INTO THE LODGE. I FELT A SUDDEN CHILL CREEP UP MY SPINE. HOW DID DELLA KNOW ABOUT THAT?

I'LL HELP YOU WITH THE BAGS, ALAN!

RIGHT ON... SURE...



DELLA AND I UNPACKED IN SILENCE. THAT *COULDNESS* SHE'D SHOWN TOWARDS ME LATELY... THOSE REJECTIONS OF MY AMOROUS ADVANCES... COULD IT BE...?

DELLA, I...

NOT NOW, ALAN! ANDY MUST BE STARVED. I'LL GO FOR SOMETHING FOR US!



SHE HURRIED OFF TO THE KITCHEN, LEAVING ME WITH MY DOUBTS AND MY UNCERTAINTIES AND A ROILING TIDE OF MISTRUST AND SUSPICION. ANDY CAME IN AFTER A WHILE...

HERE'S MY CAR-PHONE NUMBER, ALAN. WHERE SHALL I PUT IT?

OH? OK, JUST PUT IT DOWN ON THE BUREAU THERE, ANDY!



AFTER SUPPER, WE SAT AROUND AND MADE IDLE CHATTER... AND THEN DELLA ANNOUNCED...

I THINK WE ALL OUGHT TO GET TO BED EARLY TONIGHT, TOMORROW, WE'LL GET THE BOAT OUT, AND SO COME SAILING!

GOOD IDEA! I'M PACKED & READY, YOU TWO!

GOOD NIGHT, ANDY!



AFTER WE GOT TO BED, BELLA REFUSED ME AGAIN, AND I FINALLY DROPPED OFF INTO A FRETFUL SLEEP. I DREAMED I SAW ANDY AND BELLA... *RISINGS*...



I WAS AWAKENED WITH A START ABOUT THREE IN THE MORNING BY THE SLAMMING OF A CAR TRUNK. I SAT UP. THE BED BESIDE ME WAS *EMPTY*. THEN, I HEARD WHISPERING VOICES OUTSIDE...



THAT'S BELLA'S VOICE... AND ANDY'S! THEY'RE *OUT THERE... TOGETHER!*

I SLIPPED INTO A ROBE AND TIP-TOED OUT OF THE LODGE, DOWN THE TRAIL, THE DOOR TO THE *BURST COTTAGE* CLOSED. THE *BLINDS* WERE DRAWN, BUT THE *LIGHTS* WERE ON INSIDE.



I WAS *AWAY!* THERE IS SOMETHING GOING ON BETWEEN THEM!

I MOVED TO THE BURST COTTAGE SILENTLY... LISTENING. INDEED, BELLA WAS LAUGHING SOFTLY, AND ANDY'S VOICE WAS WARM.



ALAN HAS NO IDEA, HAS HE... I MEAN... ABOUT WHAT WE'RE *PLANNING?*

NO! IT'LL BE A COMPLETE *SURPRISE* TO HER WHEN HE FINDS OUT. DID YOU *GET* ME EVERYTHING I'LL *NEED!*

YET I BOUGHT *EVERYTHING* ON YOUR *LIST*. I *SURE* WAS *EMBARRASSED* BUYING THOSE *DRESSES* THOUGH.



WELL, I *COULDN'T* DO IT *MYSELF!* ALAN WOULD HAVE *RESPECTED* THEM ON, ANDY... WE'VE *BOTH* WANTED THIS SO *BADLY*... AND WE'VE *WAITED* SO *LONG!*

JEALOUSLY AND *HATE* TORE AT MY HEART, RIPPED *FEARS* FROM MY EYES, AND SENT THEM SPILLING DOWN MY *CHEEKS*. ANDY AND BELLA... MY *BEST* FRIEND... AND MY *WIFE*. I COULDN'T SEE IN THROUGH THE *SHADED* WINDOWS, BUT I COULD JUST *IMAGINE* THEM IN EACH OTHER'S *ARMS*...

EVERY TIME HE'S TAKEN ME IN HIS *ARMS* I'VE WANTED TO *TELL* HIM ABOUT IT. I'VE HAD TO MAKE *EXCUSES*... REFUSE HIS *ADVANCES*...

IT'S BEEN *DIFFICULT* BELLA... BUT AFTER *SUNDAY*, IT'LL BE *ALL* OVER. HE'LL *KNOW!*



I STAGGERED FROM THE COTTAGE, AS I PASSED ANDY'S NEW CAR, I NOTICED THE *TRUNK* SLIGHTLY *AJAR*. I SWUNG IT OPEN, *CURIOUS*...



EMPTY! THEY LIED TO ME. THEY SAID THE *PHONE* CHASSIS WAS IN HERE. BELLA'S *TRUNKS* WERE IN HERE. THE THINGS ANDY *BOUGHT* HER! NEW *DRESSES*. PERHAPS A *FUR* COAT? NO! OH, LORD... *NO!*

THEY WERE GOING TO **RUN OFF TOGETHER**. THEY'D BROUGHT ME UP TO THE LODGE TO **FEEL ME**. NO WONDER DELLA WANTED ANDY ALONE. NO WONDER WE'D USED HIS CAR. THEY WERE GOING TO LAUGH... AND SAY...



SORRY, ALAN. HAPPY LAST ANNIVERSARY!

THAT'S THE WAY THINGS ARE, ALAN...

AND THEN THEY WERE GOING TO DRIVE OFF AND LEAVE ME THERE... STRANDED...



'BYE, ALAN!

HOPE WE SEE YOU... ANOTHER!

SUDDENLY I HATED THEM. I HATED THEIR DECEPTION. I HATED DELLA FOR WHAT SHE'D DONE TO OUR MARRIAGE. I HATED ANDY FOR PRETENDING TO BE MY FRIENDS AND ALL THE WHILE TWISTING MY WIFE FROM ME.



NO WONDER HE NEVER HAD CHILDREN! DELLA NEVER WANTED ANY! SHE NEVER LOVED ME ENOUGH!

I LAY AWAKE FOR A LONG TIME, THE ANGER AND HURT INSIDE ME GROWING. THEN, DELLA AND ANDY CAME IN, WHISPERING SOFTLY, AND I HEARD THE REDDING SOUND OF A **KISS**...



FOR GODS SAKES!

THANKS, DARLING!

I FROZE AS SHE CRAWLED INTO BED BESIDE ME. AND I KNEW THAT I HAD TO KILL THEM. I LAY THERE AND I PLANNED IT. IN THE MORNING, WE WERE TO GO **SAILING**. IT WOULD BE SO SIMPLE...



ALAN! PUT DOWN THAT SPIKE!

SHHHHHHHH...

ALAN!

I WOULD FINISH THEM BOTH UNCONSCIOUS, THEN CAPSIZING THE SAILBOAT AND SWIM TO SHORE...



AND IT WOULD BE JUST AN UNFORTUNATE BOATING ACCIDENT!

BY MORNING I HAD MADE UP MY MIND TO GO THROUGH WITH MY PLAN. BUT SOMEHOW I COULDN'T BRING MYSELF TO DO IT. AND AFTER WE'D BEEN OUT ON THE LAKE A FEW HOURS...



IT'S STARTING TO RAIN!

HEAD FOR HOME, ALAN.

YES...

THE STORM SEEMED TO COME UP SUDDENLY. I **PIVOTED** THE BOAT WOULD CAPSIZE BY ITSELF. BUT WE MADE IT BACK TO THE LOGGIE SAFELY. WE ARRIVED CHILLED AND SOAKED TO THE SKIN...



WE'D BETTER GET OUT OF THESE WET CLOTHES...

I'LL LIGHT A FIRE!

ALL AFTERNOON, THE STORM RAGED. TOWARD EVENING, IT SUBSIDED. THE PHONE RANG AND I ANSWERED IT...

HELLO? JUST WANTED TO ASK YOU FOLKS THAT THE BRIDGE DOWN THE ROAD IS WASHED OUT, SO DON'T TRY TO COME INTO FORTH TOMORROW.



THE BRIDGE... THE BRIDGE AT THE BOTTOM OF THAT DANGEROUS GRADE... THE BRIDGE THAT YOU COULDN'T SEE TILL YOU WERE ALMOST DOWN IT... HAD BEEN WASHED AWAY...



WHO WAS IT, ALAN?

NO ONE, BELLA! JUST A WRONG NUMBER!

A PLAN WAS FORMING IN MY MIND. A DEATH-PLAN...

I USUALLY DRIVE INTO FORTH ON SUNDAYS TO GET FRESH ROLLS FOR BREAKFAST, ANDY'S OF COURSE. I WOULDN'T EXPECT YOU TO LET ME USE YOUR NEW CAR...



OH THAT'S ALL RIGHT, ALAN! I'LL BE GLAD TO GO IN.

ANDY'S FALLEN FOR IT. BELLA WAS NEXT...

HE WON'T KNOW WHERE TO GO, BELLA. WHY DON'T YOU DRIVE IN WITH AMY?

OF COURSE, DEAR. WE'LL MAKE IT EARLY, AMY! ABOUT EIGHT!



IT WAS DONE. THE BRIDGE WAS WASHED OUT. THEY'D COME DOWN THE GRADE AND SEE IT AND IT WOULD BE TOO LATE...



THAT NIGHT, BELLA AND AMY WENT DOWN TO THE GUEST COTTAGE AGAIN AND RETURNED HOURS LATER. I PRETENDED I WAS ASLEEP. I FELT CHILLED AND MY THROAT FELT SORE. I WAS PROBABLY COMING DOWN WITH A COLD. IN THE MORNING, I HEARD ANDY'S KNOCK.



READY TO GO INTO TOWN, BELLA?

—EACH IN A MINUTE, ANDY!

DELLA DRESSED QUICKLY. I SWALLOWED THE LUMP IN MY THROAT AND LISTENED TO THEM LEAVE THE LODGE.

LET'S GO...



THEN I GOT UP. I DASHED TO THE DOOR, AND WATCHED THEM ZOOM AWAY...

W-FITY!
SUCH A LOVELY NEW CAR!



A MURDER CURIOUSITY DREW ME TO THE GUEST COTTAGE. I WANTED TO SEE THE SCENE... THE RUMPLED BED... THE PACKED SUITCASES WITH DELLA'S NEW THINGS THAT ANDY'S BORNE. I KICKED OPEN THE DOOR ANDRELY...

GOOD LORD!



THE COTTAGE WAS CHEERFULLY DECORATED. A COLORFUL SIGN GREETED ME. A BATHNET STOOD IN ONE CORNER... A NEW CUPID IN THE OTHER... A COMPLETE LAYETTE WAS LEAD OUT ON THE TABLE LEISURE THE BOX OF CIGARS. MATERNITY DRESSES LAY ON THE BED. LITTLE KNIFTED THINGS... DIAPERS... BOTTLES... BLANKETS...

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY DADDY!! OH, GOD...



THAT'S WHY SHE HAD BEEN COULD TO ME. DELLA WAS GOING TO HAVE A BABY! SHE WANTED TO SURPRISE ME. ANDY WAS THESE THINGS IN THE TRUNK. OH, GOD... AND I THOUGHT... I... I... SENT THEM TO THEIR DEATHS...



I TORE INTO THE HOUSE. THERE WAS ONE CHANCE TO STOP THEM. ONE SLIM CHANCE...

ANDY'S GAR... IT WAS A TELEPHONE! HE GAVE ME THE NUMBER...



I FOUND THE CAR-PHONE NUMBER ON THE BURNAL WHERE ANDY LEFT IT. I STUMBLED TO THE PHONE. I LIFTED THE RECEIVER...

NUMBER, PLEASE... CH... M-M...



I OPENED MY MOUTH. I TRIED TO SPEAK. NOTHING CAME OUT. NOT A SOUND...



I HAD COME DOWN THAT NIGHT WITH A BAD CASE OF LARYNGITIS!
-THE END-

THE SHOW'S ON,
GANG!

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- HITS EVERY TELEVISION NEWS ... SPORTS AND ALL!
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from you, the laughter, always, go— (see you!)

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PUT YOUR "IN THE MONEY" — AND MORE! Your savings pile up PLENTY FAST—and with the marvelous new Television Bank! None of your friends, relatives or chance visitors can resist depositing enough to see the

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